

What is claimed is:

1. Apparatus, operatively coupled by a communications channel to a host computer, the host computer having at least a first disk drive, the apparatus comprising:
 - a second disk drive;
 - a user-activatable button associated with said second disk drive;
 - 5 circuitry, operatively coupled to said second disk drive, which, in response to a press of said user-activatable button, causes a backup of at least some data from said first disk drive to said second disk drive.
2. Apparatus, as claimed in claim 1, wherein said second disk drive is an external disk drive.
3. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said second disk drive has a housing and wherein said user-activatable button is associated with said data storage device by being mounted on said housing.
4. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said second disk drive has a housing and wherein said housing is provided in the absence of being rigidly attached to said host computer.
5. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said communications channel includes a communications channel selected from the group consisting of a Universal

Serial Bus (USB) communications channel, an IEEE 1394 communications channel, a wireless communications channel and an Ethernet communications channel.

6. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1 further comprising an indicator which indicates execution of said backup.

7. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein, during normal use, operation of said user-activatable button suffices, substantially by itself, to initiate said backup, in the absence of a need for user input other than said operation of said user-activatable button.

8. Apparatus, as claimed in claim 1 wherein, prior to normal operation of said apparatus for backup, said host computer can be provided with configuration information relating to said backup.

9. A data storage apparatus, operatively coupled to a host device, comprising:
a housing containing a data storage device and circuitry for controlling said data storage device to write data, sent from said host device, onto said data storage device and to read data for sending to said host device, said housing being external to said host device
5 wherein said housing is provided in the absence of being rigidly attached to said host device;

a communications channel for accommodating the sending of data to and from said host device;

at least a first user input device associated with said data storage apparatus;
10 circuitry, coupled to said data storage device, which, in response to at least a first input
provided on said user input device, performs at least one of:
a user-selectable function performed at least partially on said host device;
and
substantially automatic storage of data sent from said host device to said
15 data storage device.

10. Apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein said user input device is
associated with said data storage device by being mounted on said housing.

11. Apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein said host device is a computer.

12. Apparatus as claimed in claim 11, wherein said computer includes at least
a first internal data storage device.

13. Apparatus as claimed in claim 12, wherein said internal data storage
device is a hard disk drive.

14. Apparatus as claimed in claim 11, wherein said substantially automatic
storage of data comprises a back up of at least part of the totality of data stored in said
computer.

15. Apparatus as claimed in claim 11, wherein said substantially automatic storage of data comprises a backup of predetermined portions of data stored in said computer.

16. Apparatus as claimed in claim 11, wherein said substantially automatic storage of data comprises a backup of user-selectable portions or types of data stored in said computer.

17. Apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein said data storage apparatus comprises a disk drive.

18. Apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein said communications channel includes a communications channel selected from the group consisting of a Universal Serial Bus (USB) communications channel, an IEEE 1394 communications channel, a wireless communications channel and an Ethernet communications channel.

19. Apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein said user input device comprises a pressable button.

20. Apparatus as claimed in claim 9 further comprising an indicator which indicates execution of said at least one of a user-selectable function and substantially automatic storage.

21. Apparatus as claimed in claim 9 wherein, during normal use, operation of said user input device suffices, substantially by itself, to initiate execution of said at least one of a user-selectable function and substantially automatic storage, in the absence of a need for user input other than said operation of said user input device.

22. Apparatus, as claimed in claim 21, wherein, prior to normal operation of said apparatus for backup, said host device can be provided with configuration information relating to said at least one of a user-selectable function and substantially automatic storage.

23. A method for use in connection with a data storage device, operatively coupled to a host device, comprising:

providing a housing which contains said data storage device said housing being external to said host device wherein said housing is provided in the absence of being rigidly attached to said host device;

electronically controlling said data storage device to write data, sent from said host device, onto said data storage device and to read data for sending to said host device over a communications channel;

providing input via a user input device associated with said data storage device;

performing, in response to at least a first input provided on said user input device, at least one of:

a user-selectable function wherein said function is performed at least partially on said host device; and

substantially automatic storing of data sent from said host device to said data storage device.

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24. A method as claimed in claim 23, wherein said user input device is associated with said data storage device by being mounted on said housing.

25. A method as claimed in claim 23, wherein said host device is a computer.

26. A method as claimed in claim 25, wherein said computer includes at least a first internal data storage device.

27. A method as claimed in claim 26, wherein said internal data storage device is a hard disk drive.

28. A method as claimed in claim 25, wherein said substantially automatic storing of data comprises performing a back up of at least part of the totality of data stored in said computer.

29. A method as claimed in claim 25, wherein said substantially automatic storing of data comprises performing a backup of predetermined portions of data stored in said computer.

30. A method as claimed in claim 25, wherein said substantially automatic storing of data comprises performing a backup of user-selectable portions or types of data stored in said computer.

31. A method as claimed in claim 23, wherein said data storage device comprises a disk drive.

32. A method as claimed in claim 23, wherein said communications channel includes a communications channel selected from the group consisting of a Universal Serial Bus (USB) communications channel, an IEEE 1394 communications channel, a wireless communications channel and an Ethernet communication channel.

33. A method as claimed in claim 23, wherein said user input device comprises a pressable button and wherein said step of providing input comprises pressing said pressable button.

34. A method as claimed in claim 23 further comprising providing an indication of the execution of said at least one of a user-selectable function and substantially automatic storage.

35. A method as claimed in claim 23 wherein, during normal use, operation of said user input device suffices, substantially by itself, to initiate execution of said at least one of a user-selectable function and substantially automatic storage, in the absence of a need for user input other than said operation of said user input device.

36. Apparatus for use in connection with a data storage device, operatively coupled to a host device, comprising:

a housing means for containing said data storage device said housing means being external to said host device wherein said housing means is provided in the absence of being rigidly attached to said host device;

means for controlling said data storage device to write data, sent from said host device, onto said data storage device and to read data for sending to said host device over a communications means;

a user input means, associated with said data storage apparatus;

means for performing, in response to at least a first input provided on said user input means, at least one of:

a user-selectable function wherein said function is performed at least partially on said host device; and

substantially automatic storage of data sent from said host device to said data storage device.

37. Apparatus as claimed in claim 36, wherein said user input means is associated with said data storage device by being mounted on said housing.

38. Apparatus as claimed in claim 36, wherein said host device is a computer.

39. Apparatus as claimed in claim 38, wherein said computer includes at least a first internal data storage means.

40. Apparatus as claimed in claim 39, wherein said internal data storage means is a hard disk drive.

41. Apparatus as claimed in claim 38, wherein said means for performing substantially automatic storage of data comprises means for performing a backup of at least part of the totality of data stored in said computer.

42. Apparatus as claimed in claim 38, wherein said means for performing substantially automatic storage of data comprises means for performing a backup of predetermined portions of data stored in said computer.

43. Apparatus as claimed in claim 38, wherein said means for performing substantially automatic storage of data comprises means for performing a backup of user-selectable portions or types of data stored in said computer.

44. Apparatus as claimed in claim 36, wherein said data storage device comprises a disk drive.

45. Apparatus as claimed in claim 36, wherein said communications means includes a communications channel selected from the group consisting of a Universal Serial Bus (USB) communications channel, an IEEE 1394 communications channel, a wireless communications channel and an Ethernet communications channel.

46. Apparatus as claimed in claim 45, wherein said user input means comprises a pressable button.

47. Apparatus as claimed in claim 36 further comprising means for providing an indication of the execution of said at least one of a user-selectable function and substantially automatic storage.

48. Apparatus as claimed in claim 36 wherein, during normal use, operation of said user input means suffices, substantially by itself, to initiate execution of said at least

one of a user-selectable function and substantially automatic storage, in the absence of a need for user input other than said operation of said user input device.

49. Apparatus, as claimed in claim 48, further comprising means for communicating to said host device, configuration information relating to said at least one of a user-selectable function and substantially automatic storage, prior to normal use of said data storage device for backup.

50. Apparatus for data backup, operatively coupled to a host computer, comprising:

a disk drive;

a housing containing said disk drive, said housing and disk drive being external to said host computer wherein said housing is provided in the absence of being rigidly attached to said host device;

circuitry which controls said disk drive to write data, sent from said host computer, onto said disk drive and to read data for sending to said host computer over a communications channel;

a push button mounted on said housing;

circuitry configured to perform a backup of at least selected data stored in said computer, onto said disk drive, in response to activation of said push button.

51. Apparatus as claimed in claim 50, wherein said circuitry configured to perform a backup comprises circuitry configured to perform a backup of predetermined portions of data stored in said computer.

52. Apparatus as claimed in claim 50, wherein said circuitry configured to perform a backup comprises circuitry configured to perform a backup of user-selectable portions or types of data stored in said computer.

53. Apparatus as claimed in claim 50, wherein said communications channel is selected from the group consisting of a Universal Serial Bus (USB) communications channel, an IEEE 1394 communications channel, a wireless communications channel and an Ethernet communications channel.

54. Apparatus as claimed in claim 50 further comprising an indicator which indicates initiation, progress or completion of said backup.

55. Apparatus as claimed in claim 50 wherein, during normal use, operation of said button suffices, substantially by itself, to initiate execution of said backup, in the absence of a need for user input other than said operation of said button.

56. Apparatus, as claimed in claim 51, wherein configuration information relating to said backup is performed prior to normal use of said disk drive for backup.

57. A method for data backup, operatively coupled to a host computer,
comprising:

mounting a disk drive in a housing, said housing and disk drive being external to
said host computer wherein said housing is provided in the absence of being rigidly
5 attached to said host device;

controlling said disk drive to write data, sent from said host computer, onto said
disk drive and to read data for sending to said host computer over a communications
channel;

10 mounting a push button on said housing, operatively connected, at least indirectly,
to said disk drive;

performing a backup of at least selected data stored in said computer, onto said
disk drive, in response to activation of said push button.

58. A method as claimed in claim 57, wherein said step of performing a
backup comprises performing a backup of predetermined portions of data stored in said
computer.

59. A method as claimed in claim 57, wherein said step of performing a
backup comprises performing a backup of user-selectable portions or types of data stored
in said computer.

60. A method as claimed in claim 57, wherein said communications channel is selected from the group consisting of a Universal Serial Bus (USB) communications channel, an IEEE 1394 communications channel, a wireless communications channel and an Ethernet communications channel.

61. A method as claimed in claim 57 further comprising indicating initiation, progress or completion of said backup.

62. A method as claimed in claim 57 wherein, during normal use, operation of said button suffices, substantially by itself, to initiate execution of said backup, in the absence of a need for user input other than said operation of said button.

63. A method, as claimed in claim 57, further comprising providing configuration information relating to said backup, prior to normal use of said disk drive for backup.

64. A method, as claimed in claim 63, wherein said configuration information includes identification of drives, directories, sub-directories, files or file types designated for backup.

65. A method, as claimed in claim 63, wherein said configuration information includes designation of a backup destination.

66. Apparatus for data backup, operatively coupled to a host computer,
comprising:

means for mounting a disk drive in a housing means, said housing means and
disk drive being external to said host computer wherein said housing means is provided
5 in the absence of being rigidly attached to said host device;

means for controlling said disk drive to write data, sent from said host computer,
onto said disk drive and to read data for sending to said host computer over a
communications means;

button means on said housing, operatively connected, at least indirectly, to said
10 disk drive;

means for performing a backup of at least selected data stored in said computer,
onto said disk drive, in response to activation of said button means.

67. Apparatus as claimed in claim 66, wherein said means for performing a
backup comprises means for performing a backup of predetermined portions of data
stored in said computer.

68. Apparatus as claimed in claim 66, wherein said means for performing a
backup comprises means for performing a backup of user-selectable portions or types of
data stored in said computer.

69. Apparatus as claimed in claim 66, wherein said communications channel is selected from the group consisting of a Universal Serial Bus (USB) communications channel, an IEEE 1394 communications channel, a wireless communications channel and an Ethernet communications channel.

70. Apparatus as claimed in claim 66 further comprising means for indicating at least one of initiation, progress or completion of said backup.

71. Apparatus as claimed in claim 66 wherein, during normal use, operation of said button means suffices, substantially by itself, to initiate execution of said backup, in the absence of a need for user input other than said operation of said button means.

72. Apparatus, as claimed in claim 66, further comprising means for providing configuration information relating to said backup, prior to normal use of said disk drive for backup.

73. Apparatus, as claimed in claim 72, wherein said configuration information includes identification of drives, directories, sub-directories, files or file types designated for backup.

74. Apparatus, as claimed in claim 72, wherein said configuration information includes designation of a backup destination.

75. Apparatus for data backup, operatively coupled to a host computer,
comprising:
a disk drive;
a housing containing said disk drive;
5 circuitry which controls said disk drive to write data, sent from said host
computer, onto said disk drive;
a push button operatively coupled to said housing;
circuitry configured to receive an indication of a status of said button and to pass
said button status information to said host computer;
10 said host computer configured to respond to at least a first button status, or status
change, by executing software which is configured to store at least first information in
said host computer onto said disk drive.

76. Apparatus as claimed in claim 75, wherein said housing is provided in the
absence of being rigidly attached to said host device.

77. Apparatus, as claimed in claim 75, wherein said disk drive is coupled to
bridge circuitry which provided for serial-to-parallel data conversion and wherein said
circuitry configured to receive an indication of a status of said button is provided on said
bridge circuitry.

78. Apparatus, as claimed in claim 75, wherein said disk drive is coupled to drive control circuitry which includes control of an actuator arm of said disk drive and wherein said circuitry configured to receive an indication of a status of said button is provided on said drive control circuitry.

79. Apparatus as claimed in claim 75, wherein said host computer configured to respond to at least a first button status by periodically polling to determine button status.

80. Apparatus as claimed in claim 75, wherein said host computer is configured to respond to at least a first button status by receiving an asynchronous message from said circuitry configured to receive an indication of a status of said button.

81. Apparatus as claimed in claim 75, wherein said software includes software for passing a button notification to a launcher application.

82. Apparatus as claimed in claim 75, wherein said software includes software for querying a binder database to determine at least one of a backup application name and a backup script name.

83. Apparatus as claimed in claim 82, wherein said software includes software for executing said backup application, using said script name as a parameter.

84. A method for data backup, of data on a host computer, comprising:
providing a housing containing a disk drive;
operatively coupling a push button to said housing;
receiving an indication of a status of said button;
5 passing said button status information to said host computer;
said host computer responding to at least a first button status, or status change, by
executing software which is configured to store at least first information in said host
computer onto said disk drive.

85. A method as claimed in claim 84, wherein said housing is provided in the
absence of being rigidly attached to said host device.

86. A method, as claimed in claim 84, wherein said disk drive is coupled to
bridge circuitry which provides for serial-to-parallel data conversion and wherein said
step of receiving an indication of a status of said button is performed using said bridge
circuitry.

87. A method, as claimed in claim 85, wherein said disk drive is coupled to
drive control circuitry which controls said disk drive to write data, sent from said host
computer, onto said disk drive; and wherein said step of receiving an indication of a
status of said button is performed using said drive control circuitry.

88. A method as claimed in claim 85 further comprising said host computer periodically polling to determine button status.

89. A method as claimed in claim 85 further comprising said host computer receiving an asynchronous message from said circuitry configured to receive an indication of a status of said button.

90. A method as claimed in claim 85, wherein said software provides for a process that includes passing a button notification to a launcher application.

91. A method as claimed in claim 85, wherein said software provides for a process that includes querying a binder database to determine at least one of a backup application name and a backup script name.

92. A method as claimed in claim 91, wherein said software provides for a process that includes executing said backup application, using said script name as a parameter.

93. Apparatus for backup of data on a host computer, comprising:
a housing containing a disk drive;
button means operatively coupled to said housing;
means for receiving an indication of a status of said button;

5 means for passing said button status information to said host computer;
 means, on said host computer, for responding to at least a first button status, or
status change, by executing software which is configured to store at least first information
in said host computer onto said disk drive.

94. Apparatus as claimed in claim 93, wherein said housing is provided in the
absence of being rigidly attached to said host device.

95. Apparatus, as claimed in claim 93, wherein said disk drive is coupled to
bridge circuitry which provides for serial-to-parallel data conversion and wherein said
means for receiving an indication of a status of said button includes said bridge circuitry.

96. Apparatus, as claimed in claim 93, wherein said disk drive is coupled to
drive control circuitry which controls said disk drive to write data, sent from said host
computer, onto said disk drive; and wherein said means for receiving an indication of a
status of said button includes said drive control circuitry.

97. Apparatus as claimed in claim 93 further comprising means, in said host
computer, for periodically polling to determine button status.

98. Apparatus as claimed in claim 93 further comprising means, in said host computer, for receiving an asynchronous message from said circuitry configured to receive an indication of a status of said button.

99. Apparatus as claimed in claim 93, wherein said software includes means for passing a button notification to a launcher application.

100. Apparatus as claimed in claim 94, wherein said software includes means for querying a binder database to determine at least one of a backup application name and a backup script name.

101. Apparatus as claimed in claim 100, wherein said software includes means for executing said backup application, using said script name as a parameter.